Northampton
Mercury

Thursday, August 11, 2011

Formerly known as Northampton Mercury & Citizen First published 1760

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Cobblers storm to another Carling Cup win

See back page

You're re-hired!

A NORTHAMPTON construction firm has managed to almost double its profits and re-employ redundant staff since it was hit by the peak of the economic recession three years ago.

Aluminium tower manufacturer Euro Towers Ltd, based in Round Spinney, received help from UK Trade and Investment (UKTI) and the Manufacturing Advisory Service (MAS) to increase its turnover, which dropped by 70 per cent during the recession but now stands at more than £5 million.

In addition the number of staff employed at the family-run firm has risen from 36 to 50.

Exports, which used to make up one third of the firm's orders, now count for 50 per cent of the annual turnover and the company has just secured more than £1 million in orders from France and Singapore for its aluminium towers and access products.

Sue Verallo, joint owner with husband Roger, said: "With UKTI support we were able to translate our websites and brochures into several languages, which helped the company when exhibiting overseas.

"Support was also available to help with overseas exhibitions, and the great thing was it was all free. In the worst part of the recession UKTI's support was invaluable."

Sharon McCarthy, international trade advisor for UKTI, said: "You could see the genuine heartache caused when they had to start letting people go. Being able to help them increase their exports has been great. It's fantastic news that they are now securing large orders overseas."

Dean Barnes, from MAS, said: "We've had a long working relationship with Euro Towers, sharing ideas and offering business advice, so I'm delighted with the result of this and pleased to see the company are now firmly back in control and where they belong."

Roger and Sue Verallo, owners of Euro Towers *Contributed picture*

Soldier guilty of multiple rapes

A SOLDIER from Northampton is facing years in prison after being convicted of raping three teens and trying to abduct two schoolgirls.

Jonathan Haynes, aged 30, was found guilty of six counts of rape, two kidnaps and two attempted kidnappings following a three-week trial at Bristol Crown Court.

The predator, of Saxon Street, The Headlands, Northampton, will be sentenced on September 8.

Two arrested for rumours of riots

TWO teenagers were arrested on suspicion of inciting or promoting violence on social networking sites after false rumours of trouble in the county spread across the internet this week.

Police were inundated with calls about alleged "copycat" disturbances in Northampton town centre, Abington Park, the Weston Favell Centre and elsewhere across the county, on Tuesday. None were true.

'Prison terms for murder too short'

THE county councillor for Deanhanger said the sentences handed to the men involved in the murder of Adil Basharat were too short.

Councillor Allen Walker, who was chairman of governors at Kingsbrook School when the 16-year-old was killed, criticised the 16-year sentence for Adam Moore for murder and three-year terms for Freddy Wilson, Daniel Anderson and Jake Batten for violent disorder.

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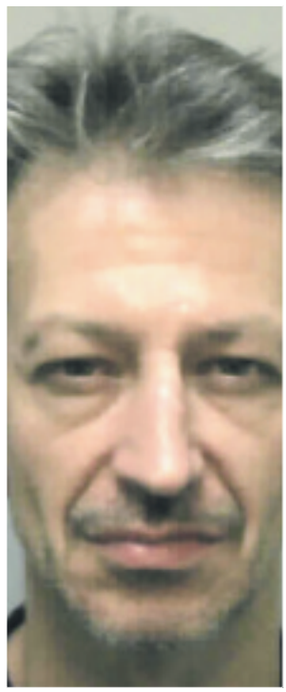
Cop roadshow heads east

A ROADSHOW in east Northampton this week will tackle anti-social behaviour.

Northamptonshire Police will join forces with partners including tenancy enforcement officers, environmental wardens, the anti-social behaviour unit, councillors and victim support for a series of activities in the area until Sunday.

The mobile police station will be in various locations around the area this week, leaflets and posters will be available, and street briefings will take place in areas where incidents of anti-social behaviour are highest.

The roadshow will be at Blackthorn shops 2pm to 6pm today, Thorplands shops 2pm to 6pm tomorrow, Fieldmill Square 11am to 3pm on Thursday, Riverside Retail Park 1am to 3pm on Friday, Weston Favell Shopping Centre 11am to 3pm on Saturday and in Abington Park 10am to 4pm on Sunday.



Above, Sam Scullion, Steven Warren and Paul Johansson who carried out a bungled raid at a pub

Bungled raid ends in prison

THREE masked men who took part in a bungled attempt to rob from the safe of a Northampton pub have been jailed for three years each.

Paul Johansson, aged 43, his son Steven Warren, aged 25, and Sam Scullion, aged 21, tried to force a member of staff at The Britannia in Bedford Road, to open the safe while the pub was closing on Sunday, May 22.

Northampton Crown Court heard the member of staff was closing up when he spotted four masked men approach the pub and told him to lead them to the safe which held the takings, telling him he would be unharmed if he did as told.

When they were about to bind his hands with cable ties, he told them he did not have access to the safe and ran back into the pub to raise the alarm.

As the would-be raiders then fled from the scene, three defendants were spotted by a police officer who was sitting in his car nearby due to having a flat tyre.

He alerted colleagues, who traced the defendants and arrested with the help of a police dog.

Johansson, of no fixed address, Warren, of Wade Meadow Court, Lings, Northampton, and Scullion, of Regent Street, Semilong, Northampton, pleaded guilty yesterday to attempted robbery and were each sentenced to three years' imprisonment.

Sentencing, Judge Charles Wide QC said the trio were guilty of "a serious criminal enterprise" which had lacked "sophistication" but was intent on threatening a member of the pub's staff to give them access to the safe.

Addressing Scullion, who accepted he had been part of an "inept" operation and presented the court with a letter of apology, the judge said he already had a "very bad" criminal record, having been last sentenced for assault in 2008.

Johansson, a self-employed carpenter who the court heard was having money troubles, needed extra money after hearing his partner had fallen pregnant.

Make your vote for park

RESIDENTS are being urged to cast their vote and help Daventry Country Park win a national award.

The park recently received its 11th Green Flag Award, to recognise outside spaces, in the last 12 years and has now qualified to compete for the People's Choice – Site of the Year Award.

The award is given to the park that receives the highest number of votes from members of the public on the Green Flag Awards website, with voting closing on September 11. Councillor Alan Hills, from Daventry District Council, said: "Daventry Country Park has long been the jewel in the crown of our district and would be a deserving winner of the national People's Choice Award. I would encourage anyone who has visited and enjoyed the park to spare a moment to go online and cast their vote."

Green Flag judges visited the park in April and it passed stringent qualifying criteria.

To vote, people need to visit the Daventry Country Park page at www.greenflagaward.org.uk and click the "vote" button. The awards are run by the Green Flag Plus Partnership, a consortium of Keep Britain Tidy, British Trust for Conservation Volunteers and GreenSpace.

Funds for church

FUNDS raised from an arts festival held in Alderton, near Towcester, will be used to help maintain the village church.

The festival will take place on Saturday, September 3, and Sunday, September 4, and will include the sale of paintings by local artists.

India match nets £150,000 for club

CRICKET bosses are hopeful of attracting more international tourists to Wantage Road in the coming years, after revealing the visit of India was worth around £150,000 to the club.

The visit of the star-studded Indian team helped pack out the County Ground for a lucrative two-day tour match, which was the final preparation for the tourists before the third test match against England starts tomorrow.

The match attracted huge numbers of Indian fans through the turnstiles on Friday as well as a sell-out crowd on Saturday.

Mark Tagg, chief executive of Northamptonshire County Cricket Club, said the tour match was worth in the region of £150,000, before costs, to the club.

He said the welcome payday made up for a "disappointing" 20:20 campaign, which was blighted by wet weather and poor results.

Mr Tagg said he was also hopeful of attracting touring sides back to the town in the near future, starting with South Africa next summer. Both Pakistan and Australia have taken on the Steelbacks in the last two years.

He said: "What we hope is that because we look after them extremely well – we make sure they are well fed and watered and look after them properly, we provide a good pitch and put out a good side – that it is fed back to the ECB and that we are in a good position to get the next tourists.

"The game brought in a lot of Indian supporters and hopefully if we can get South Africa next year that might do the same."

Mr Tagg played down stories, largely in the Indian press, about a post-match altercation between a frustrated Indian supporter and Praveen Kumar, a medium pace bowler for the tourists.

Reports suggested the Indian cricketer had brandished a cricket bat when confronting an angry fan as the team left the ground. Mr Tagg, however, said he was aware an altercation had taken place, but insisted it was only an exchange of words.

He added: "The match was a big success for us, it was nice to see so many people in the ground. A lot of those people were supporting India and maybe wouldn't have been before so hopefully they may come back."

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County officers help out in riots

SPECIALIST officers from Northamptonshire – including at least one on annual leave – were sent to London on Monday to help deal with another night of riots and looting.

Twenty-two specially trained public order officers from the county were drafted into the capital on Monday to assist officers from the Metropolitan Police as they dealt with another night of clashes and violent disorder.

A spokesman for Northamptonshire Police said: "The Metropolitan Police service has requested mutual aid in order to put in place extra resources on duty across the capital. In response to this Northamptonshire Police has sent one PSU (Police Support Unit) consisting of one inspector, three sergeants and 18 officers."

Officers are being drafted in to help Met colleagues

One Daventry officer, who was drafted into London, posted on his Twitter page yesterday: "Had my annual leave interrupted today to head down to Tottenham to assist our Met Police colleagues with the disorder. Wish me luck."

Event hits the road

A ROADSHOW in east Northampton this week will tackle anti-social behaviour.

Northamptonshire Police will join forces with partners including tenancy enforcement officers, environmental wardens, the anti-social behaviour unit, councillors and victim support for a series of activities in the area until Sunday.

The roadshow hopes to raise awareness of the issue of anti-social behaviour and ensure residents know which agency to contact if they encounter problems.

It also aims to raise awareness of the consequences of anti-social behaviour, promote the reporting of incidents, provide information on the support available for victims and encourage parents to take responsibility for the actions of their children.

The mobile police station will be in various locations around the area this week, leaflets and posters will be available, and street briefings will take place in areas where incidents of anti-social behaviour are highest.

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Additional floor space has been acquired to extend the showroom over two floors at Wharfside in Fenny Stratford.

John Connolly (pictured right) with General Manager Dave Connell proudly displaying the company's Pilkington EnergiKare certificate.

Dave said " I have found that most of our customers are looking for the best possible products in terms of energy efficiency at the moment. Saving money on fuel bills and reducing energy consumption is definitely a priority. I am convinced that we are able to offer the widest possible range of home improvement products that give our customers the very highest quality at simply unbeatable prices. I welcome customers personally to visit the new showroom and see for themselves the extensive range of doors, windows and home improvements we have to offer. The showroom is open 7 days a week to make sure that there is always a convenient time for our customers to visit us, and I am always pleased to discuss a customer's exact requirements and offer my experience and advice as well as giving an immediate quotation. Another unique service that many customers find useful, is our instant online quotation website. It can be used to compare any quotation a customer may already have, or to get an accurate price on new windows and doors, it is easy to use! I feel we offer by far the most comprehensive range of products in the region and am convinced that our transparent pricing policy gives customers excellent value and complete peace of mind"

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Oldest resident in the county dies aged 108

THE oldest resident of Northamptonshire has died in a care home in Northampton at the age of 108.

Alice Simmons, who was just three years younger than Britain's oldest person Violet Wood, received nine cards from the Queen during her time at Burlington Court Care Home in Roseholme Road, Abington, Northampton.

She died at the care home on July 28 and manager Adam Turvey said Mrs Simmons would be greatly missed by all the staff and residents.

He said: "She was amazing for her age and had only recently become bed-bound. Up until she was 107 she was very mobile and used to love spending time in the garden.

"She was a very independent lady and very active. She loved watching tennis and knitting. She used to swear by eating an orange every day.

"We were all very close to her and she was well loved by everybody. She was part of the furniture here."

On her 105th birthday in November 2007 Mrs Simmons, who lived almost all her life in Northampton and worked as a ledger clerk, said she thought she had lived so long because she had "always been contented and looked after herself."

Mrs Simmons married her husband Peter, a director of a grocery firm, in 1931, and settled down in Northampton where she has lived most of her life. The couple did not have any children but Mrs Simmons celebrated her milestone birthdays with many of her great-nieces and great-nephews.

Her funeral will take place at St Peter and Paul Church in Abington, Northampton, on Tuesday, August 23, at 2pm.

Alice Simmons when she celebrated her 105th birthday

A curious visitor to one of the trade boats at Blisworth Canal Festival

Festival a record

AROUND 10,000 people attended Northamptonshire's biggest canal event in Blisworth.

The Blisworth Canal Festival, which took place throughout the village over the weekend, saw 1,400ft of trade boats lined up on the water.

The annual event included boats selling fudge, crafts, cheese, books, bric-a-brac, displays of old working boats and a story-telling boat.

Activities included face painting and juggling for children and live music and entertainment.

Alan Andrews, from the Blisworth Canal Partnership, who organise the festival, said: "We have had a really good turn out again this year and great support for the charities the event raises funds for.

"Everyone has really enjoyed it."

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Margaret Williams has helped to co-ordinate a service to celebrate the life of the renowned missionary William Carey at Moulton Baptist Church on Sunday

Service to mark missionary's life

A CHURCH service to celebrate the life of a renowned missionary from Northampton will be broadcast on Radio 4 this Sunday.

A pre-recorded morning service at Mount Pleasant Baptist Church in Kettering Road, Northampton, will be broadcast at 8.10am, to mark 250 years since the birth of a former minister of Moulton Baptist Church, William Carey.

Carey was born in Paulerspury, near Towcester on August 17, 1761, and became a preacher and pioneer of the Baptist Missionary Society.

The commemorative service will be led by Roy Jenkins and David Kerrigan, the general director of the Baptist Missionary Society World Mission, which Mr Carey helped to launch.

Margaret Williams, who helped to organise the service, said: "People from all over the world have heard of William Carey.

"We are trying to interest the community in this county as well as the country.

"It's remarkable that people still want to celebrate 250 years on. Radio 4 will spread the anniversary to a wider audience and I think people from other countries will listen to it online."

A commemorative plaque will be unveiled at Northampton Station on August 17, to mark Mr Carey's baptism in 1783 in the River Nene, under the castle walls.

Ms Williams said: "The plaque will be a permanent memorial.

"We should take pride in the fact he came from this area and keep remembering and learning from what he did.

"The things he challenges us to do are still relevant today."

Carey, who died aged 72, travelled to India to spread the word of the gospel and the broadcast will launch a series of events in Northampton to mark the anniversary.

For details visit the website www.thecareyexperience.co.uk

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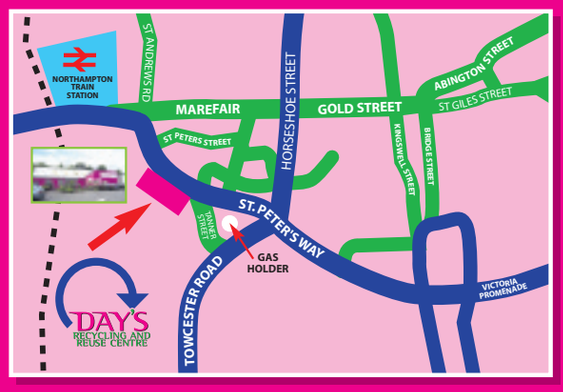

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OWNERS of the world's best-selling sports car, the Mazda MX-5, will be heading to Billing Aquadrome on Sunday, September 18, for their national rally.

The MX-5 enthusiasts first met at Billing in 1994 to form a car club which is now thought to be the largest model-specific car club in Europe.

The event is being organised by the club's Northampton area and the Mayor of Northampton is due to officially open the rally at 10am.

There will be car driving skill tests, competitions for the best cars in four different classes – open to club members only – a jazz band and a tombola raising money for Macmillan Cancer Support.

At least 25 companies specialising in everything from MX-5 parts and accessories to car insurance will be exhibiting in the traders village.

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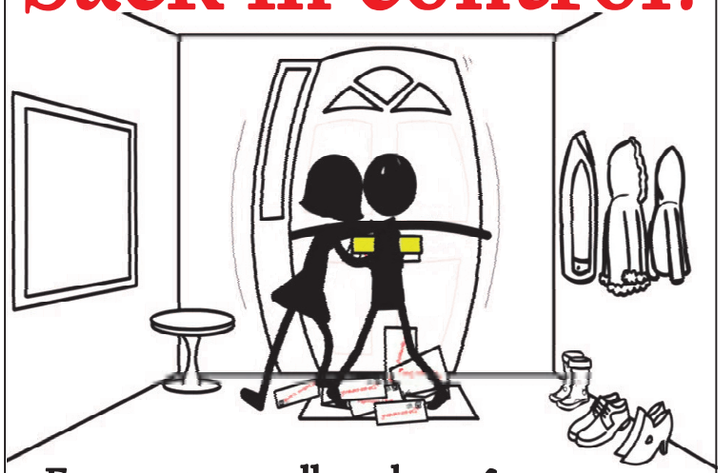

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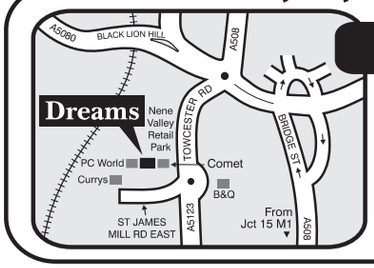

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THIS COULD BE YOU!

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THIS COULD BE YOU!

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THIS COULD BE YOU!

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Loyalty card to promote town's stores

Pictured left, Karen Anderson of Big Town Marketing, director of BID, John Gammidge, and Stuart Hopkins, of the Northampton Loyalty Card Scheme
MNCE-05-08-11-GM-037

BUSINESSES have given a thumbs-up to the launch of a new Northampton Loyalty Card scheme that encourages customers to shop locally.

More than 125 businesses, from restaurants to hairdressers, have signed up to the scheme, which means they will offer discounts and other offers to anyone who presents the card. More than 100 will offer a price discount.

Managers and company directors said the scheme could be a shot in the arm for independent trade in the town.

Leanne Brown, owner of the Reflexions Hair Studio, in the Ridings Arcade, said: "I thought it was a brilliant idea. Many people don't have a lot of money at the moment so being able to get discounts right across the town is really worthwhile."

Each business will have its own offers, with Reflexions offering a 20 per cent discount on all cuts and colourings.

Ash Day, assistant manager of Innaction Fitness Centre, based at the Park Inn Hotel said the centre would waive the £20 joining fee to all cardholders: "For the community of Northampton it gives the incentive to shop in their local area and give businesses a boost."

Membership for one person costs £15 and is valid for 12 months. Cards are available from any participating businesses, which so far includes Church's restaurant, in Bridge Street, Pressed for Time dry cleaners in Wootton, Concept6 beauticians in College Street Mews, Pizza Express in Derngate and many others.

The scheme is being backed by Northampton Business Improvement District (BID), the group set up to regenerate the town centre.

John Gammidge, director of BID, said: "The Northampton Loyalty Card is something town centre businesses indicated they wanted in order to help build customer loyalty.

"As Northampton Town Centre BID, we are pleased to support this project by covering the advertising cost for each business that elects to join the scheme. Visitors with a loyalty card will be able to enjoy great savings on a wide range of products and services. It's a concept we are keen to see grow in the coming months."

Northampton Town Centre BID will cover advertising costs for businesses in the improvement area. Contact Stuart at Northampton Loyalty Card directly on 07527 547889, or email admin@my-loyalty-card.com

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Addict given chance

A LONG-term heroin addict who spent two weeks living in a burgled property in Nether Heyford has been given a chance to prove he can beat his addiction.

Michael Howard, aged 35, pleaded guilty to burglary in Hillside Road, Nether Heyford, on March 11.

Alex Bull, prosecuting, said he admitted staying at the property for two weeks but refuted claims he had stolen anything.

Howard, now of Ryland Road, Moulton, who has a 15-year heroin addiction, was given a six-month deferred sentence by Recorder Mark Wall QC.

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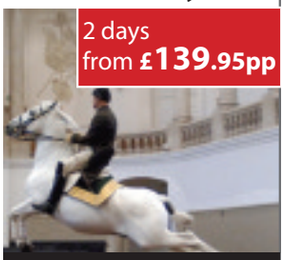

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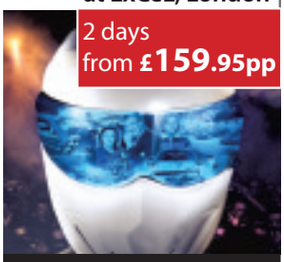

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Four jailed over death of teen outside school

GOLF club killer Adam Moore is starting a life sentence for the murder of tragic teenager Adil Basharat.

Moore, aged 20, of Cosgrove, was one of four men who attacked Adil close to Kingsbrook School in Deanshanger in November.

But the 16-year-old schoolboy was attacked in error, having been mistaken as one of two men who allegedly robbed Billy Billingham of cocaine.

At Northampton Crown Court on Monday, Moore was unanimously convicted of murder and violent disorder and jailed for life with a minimum of 16 years.

Freddy Wilson, aged 20, of Glebe Road, Deanshanger, Daniel Anderson, also 20, of Horsefair Green, Stony Stratford, and 22-year-old Jake Batten, of Maltings Row, Deanshanger were acquitted of the murder and manslaughter, but found guilty of violent disorder.

They were each jailed for three years by Judge Charles Wide QC.

Moore and Billingham, aged 19, were cleared of conspiracy to cause grievous bodily harm as the jury did not believe there was a prior plan to attack Adil.

Moore, of Bridge Road, Cosgrove, who destroyed clothing and evidence in the hour before his arrest, showed no emotion as he was jailed for life. To a packed courtroom as members of Adil's family sobbed, Judge Wide told Moore: "You took a golf club, that's bad enough as a weapon.

"You broke it hitting or hitting at Adil Basharat. It was then a lethal weapon and you used it to stab and, as the jury found, you deliberately stabbed Adil Basharat with that weapon, penetrating his body and then you pulled it out.

"You must have known perfectly well what you had done. It was a deliberate act to cause really serious harm.

"There are a number of seriously aggravating factors. This was a group attack; it was near a school; the victim was only 16; it was in the presence of other 16-year-olds and the violence was planned. It should be clearly understood what the 16-year minimum term exactly is. It is the minimum number of years that must be served even before you are considered for parole. Many prisoners go way past it."

The judge said Adil was "entirely unconnected" with any dispute the gang had with another person.

"It was unexpected and unforeseen but such things do happen when violent events like these erupt and it's a melancholy fact that the court has to deal time after time with unforeseen, fatal injuries caused in the course of general violence."

As Adil's sister Sobia said after the hearing: "Adil was not in the wrong place at the wrong time. He was at school. He was on a break and was with his friends just outside of his school when he was attacked in broad daylight."

The popular teenager from Milton Keynes was set upon on November 19 by the gang of strangers, armed with weapons including a golf club and Anderson's crutches. However, the golf club broke and the shaft was thrust into his pelvis, severing a main vein. He died at Milton Keynes General two days later.

Benjamin Aina QC, prosecuting, said the attack happened after drugs were allegedly stolen from Billingham when he had reportedly gone to Wolverton to sell cocaine a few weeks before, but they attacked the wrong victim.

Christopher Donnellan QC, defending Moore, had argued he could not be guilty of murder as he had not intended to harm or kill Adil, only to confront him. When the violence erupted, which lasted for just 90 seconds, and the golf club broke, it was only then did it became a lethal weapon.

Giving evidence, Moore claimed the stabbing of Adil was an accident when he was pushed from behind during the fighting, which broke out during the 11am break in lessons. Mr Donnellan, mitigating, said: "Nobody anticipated such dreadful consequences, the most dreadful consequences for Adil. Your honour knows of his reaction after the incident, as something of the enormity of what happened was dawning on him.

"His sorrow is genuine. He would not want anyone, particularly someone as close to his age as him, to lose their life as Adil did in these circumstances."

Speaking after the sentencing hearing, Sobia Basharat, 19, older sister of Adil, read out a statement on behalf of the family.

She said: "It has been the hardest thing in the world coming to terms with the tragic fact that I will never see my brother grow into a man, I will never see him go to university, become the accountant he wanted to, get married, have children of his own and will never see him grow old. Adil's funeral took place the day we should have celebrated his life, on his seventeenth birthday. He had so much to live for and loved his life.

"These men that attacked Adil, they still have their lives. They will live. Their families still can see them and they can still have a future. They will have the opportunity to get married, have their own families and live their lives. For me and my family we have been passed a sentence which is for life – a sentence that we will have to live every day of our lives."

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Family and friends make their feelings clear after the verdicts were read out at Northampton Crown Court on Monday. Below, from left, Adam Moore, Daniel Anderson, Freddy Wilson, Jake Batten

Robbery sparked attack

A SELF-confessed drug dealer whose robbery sparked the attack on Adil Basharat was the only defendant to be acquitted.

Billy Billingham, aged 19, told the jury he was robbed in a Wolverton graveyard by two men he was there to sell drugs to.

As Moore, Anderson and Wilson were driving through Deanshanger on November 19, Anderson pointed out Adil Basharat, believing he was one of the robbers.

Batten was summoned from his home as back-up while Moore called Billingham to obtain a description of the man who had attacked him.

But in a tragic case of mistaken identity, Adil Basharat was attacked in error.

Billingham, of Kingsfold, Bradville, Milton Keynes, who was not present during the attack, was unanimously acquitted of conspiracy to inflict grievous bodily harm with intent to cause serious injury.

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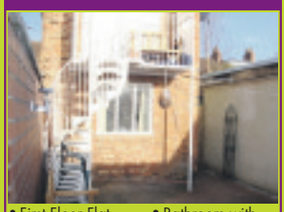

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Talent legends to star in final

***BRITAIN'S Got Talent* favourites Stavros Flatley have been announced as the star attraction for this year's Northampton's Got Talent final.**

The father and son Greek dancing act, who finished fourth in the national talent contest in 2009, will be performing and judging in the Market Square on Saturday, August 27.

The show will also be compered by the popular impressionist Les Gibson, who finished ninth in this year's *Britain's Got Talent* competition.

Mandie Smith, one of the organisers of the event, said: "We promised a bigger and better show this year and hope we have met expectations. We are really excited to have the very talented Les Gibson and Stavros Flatley as part of the show."

Becky Allen, Market Square events organiser, said: "We are looking forward to a grand final that looks set to be a fantastic afternoon of entertainment for the whole family."

The final, which will start at 1.30pm and finish at 4pm, will include two performances by Stavros Flatley and Les Gibson will open the event with a run through of his best impressions.

The event is free to attend and will also feature the top acts from this year's Northampton's Got Talent competition, for which auditions are currently taking place.

The semi-final takes place in the Grosvenor Shopping Centre on Saturday, August 20.

The winning act of this year's contest will receive £500 in Grosvenor Centre shopping vouchers. Venture Photography has also agreed to sponsor the competition and is offering the winners a session in its studio, worth £615. Gnu Films will also make a professionally produced short promotional video for the winning act.

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19th, 20th & 21st August

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Whilst ballooning is a weather dependant activity the balloonists want to fly, so if the conditions allow, the balloons will be flying at both 6am and 6pm on each of the three days of the event.

At 9.00pm on Saturday evening, we will also be having a 'Balloon Glow'. Come and watch the balloons turn into giant lanterns tethered to the ground, pulsating to the music - It's magical!.

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Laura's family to join fight on cuts to coroner service

THE family of a 21-year-old who died from a rare, undiagnosed heart condition has joined with a leading charity in a national campaign to fight Government cuts which, they say, will lead more families to suffer unnecessarily.

Student Laura Hillier collapsed suddenly at her father's doctors' surgery in Blisworth on June 20, 2003. A post-mortem found she had died from a rare, undiagnosed, hereditary heart condition that can kill without any warning, and without displaying symptoms.

Earlier this year Laura's family joined forces with charity Cardiac Risk in the Young (CRY) to fight Government proposals to cut parts of the Coroner's and Justice Act 2009, including plans to appoint a chief coroner to standardise the quality of services across the country and allow families the chance to appeal decisions.

Laura's father Tony Hillier said: "No one can understand the pain and total devastation of losing a child or partner at a young age suddenly and without warning. Although the days and months that follow are often a blur, you still want answers, and you want them fast.

"Thankfully, the majority of families are treated with great sensitivity, but sadly, for some, the experience has been appalling. Many have had to wait months, or even years, to find out a cause of death, and their concerns have been treated with little respect."

Pictured left, Laura Hillier, who died from a rare heart condition suddenly in 2003

First chief exec dies

THE first chief executive of South Northamptonshire District Council has died, aged 79.

Colin Major, who lived in Stoke Bruerne, passed away suddenly last weekend.

Born and educated in Northampton, the great-grandfather began his local government service with Northampton Town Council in 1948, before working for Northampton Rural Council and a number of other rural authorities in the West Midlands and Suffolk.

After four years as clerk of Wellingborough Rural Council, Mr Major moved to the same position at Towcester Rural Council in 1972, before being appointed the first chief executive of the newly-created South Northamptonshire District Council the following year, a post which he held for 15 years until 1988.

South Northamptonshire Council sent its condolences to Mr Major's family and friends.

Mr Major's funeral will take place at St Mary's Church in Stoke Bruerne at 11am on Friday.

It is family flowers only, and donations for local charities may be sent to John White, Independent Family Funeral Directors, 188 Watling Street East, Towcester NN12 6DB.

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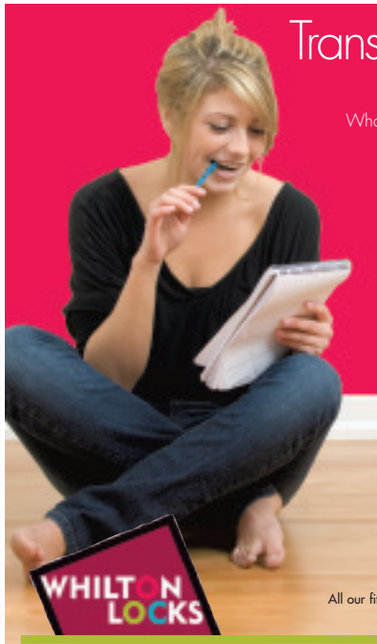

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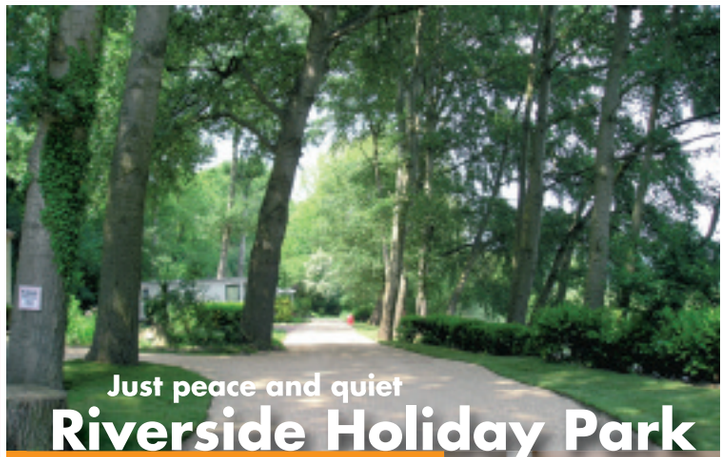

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Large Village - Silverstone **Newcomers Cup - Roade**
Overall Winners Helmdon

The winners were announced by David Scudamore, Chair of the judges of The Best Village Competition and the prizes presented by Annette & Paul Hollowell, of B Hollowell & Son Funeral Directors.

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Landmark event on river

A LANDMARK event for navigation on Northampton's river helped to promote the ongoing developments to the marina at Becket's Park.

The first ever Riverside Festival was held at the park in Northampton on Sunday, to mark 250 years of the River Nene being navigable from The Wash through Peterborough to Northampton and to celebrate developments to the marina.

Around 5,000 people attended the free event which included a medieval village, bouncy castle, music, entertainment and arts and crafts.

The festival coincided with the opening of a resurfaced footpath and park benches alongside the marina, funded by a £300,000 from

Northampton Borough Council, including around £100,000 in developer contributions to the infrastructure from the West Northamptonshire Development Corporation.

The project, which was started by the previous Lib Dem administration, will see new bins and lighting added to the park and a proposal for a waterside enterprise zone, which would create more than 13,000 new jobs, is being considered by Government and a decision will be made later this month.

The riverside has been transformed over the last few years with a new 80-berth marina, public art and improvements to the pathways running from Sixfields to Midsummer Meadow.

Chris Cavanagh, head of regeneration and development at Northampton Borough Council, said: "The new marina will accommodate both people who want to live here and those who want to visit and stay overnight.

"The enterprise zone, if it is passed, will create jobs and attract inward investment. We want to make Northampton a natural choice for investment."

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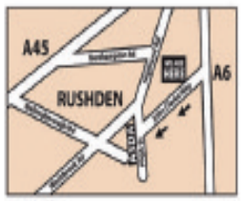

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Entertainment

There's some unfinished monkey business . . .

MAN learns a harsh lesson about meddling with Mother Nature in Rupert Wyatt's splendid new chapter in the Planet Of The Apes saga, based loosely on the novel by Pierre Boulle.

Drawing elements from different films in the original series made famous by Roddy McDowall, Kim Hunter and Charlton Heston, Rise Of The Planet Of The Apes takes advantage of the latest technological wizardry to deliver a thrilling action adventure that doesn't skimp on heartbreaking emotion.

It's all a far cry from Tim Burton's abortive 2001 remake of the original film– a creatively ambitious but structurally muddled folly doomed to failure the moment Mark Wahlberg was cast in the lead role.

Wyatt orchestrates some breathtaking set pieces, including a climactic scene of apes on the rampage in San Francisco that unfolds at dizzying speed, seamlessly melding digital and live action elements.

However, beneath all of the pyrotechnics, there beats a human heart, not least in the character of Caesar the ape, brought majestically to life by actor Andy Serkis using the same motion capture technology as Gollum in The Lord Of The Rings.

Thankfully, the film-makers haven't opted to needlessly release the film in 3D to hike up ticket prices.

Will wonders never cease?

Scientist Will Rodman (James Franco) is determined to find a cure for Alzheimer's, the disease which has slowly consumed his father Charles (John Lithgow).

Will feels certain he is close to a breakthrough and tests his latest serum on chimpanzees, noticing dramatic increases in intelligence and brain activity in the primate subjects.

However, a high-profile showcase with shareholders goes spectacularly wrong and Will's profit-driven boss, Steven Jacobs (David Oyelowo), demands the project is shut down and the test animals slaughtered.

Will smuggles a baby chimp called Caesar out of the lab and raises the infant with his father.

As the years pass and Caesar blossoms, Will falls in love with veterinarian Caroline Aranha (Freida Pinto), who is stunned by Will's ability to communicate with the chimpanzee, unaware of the animal's history.

Caroline warns Will that he cannot keep Caesar as a pet forever and meddling with nature has repercussions.

Rise Of The Planet Of The Apes marries present and past, gifting the most iconic line ("Get your filthy paws off me you damn dirty ape!") to Tom Felton, playing a sadistic keeper at the ape sanctuary where Caesar spearheads the uprising.

Scenes between Franco and Lithgow are beautifully judged and the interaction between the two men and the digitally rendered Caesar is surprisingly moving.

Pinto's underwritten role acts as the voice of reason throughout, though her warnings are never heeded.

A coda involving Will's next door neighbour succinctly lays the groundwork for subsequent films.

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Entertainment

An illuminating season of new shows at theatre

THERE'S a full line-up of dance, drama and music at The Lighthouse theatre in Kettering this autumn.

Comedy stand-up show Live at the Lighthouse is back with another great line-up of comedians. Expect plenty of belly laughs when Mock The Week stars Jarred Christmas and Andi Osho are joined on stage by Paul Tonkinson, best known for his appearances on Michael McIntyre's Comedy Roadshow.

The autumn season features some fantastic live music, starting with The Glenn Miller Orchestra on September 10 with a concert featuring the best big band numbers from the 1940s.

The war-time theme continue with the nostalgic musical show Forces Sweethearts, who will perform the hits of Vera Lynn, Doris Day and Eartha Kitt.

Respected folk singer Kate Rusby comes to the Lighthouse in October to perform songs from her new album Make The Light.

And in November the local ladies of Boobs and Brass, the unique all-female brass band, will give another concert in aid of breast cancer charities.

Dance fans can also look forward to some great shows, the highlight being a performance of Tchaikovsky's The Nutcracker by the State Ballet Academy of Minsk.

Local dancers will also take to the stage this season, including performers from Starlight Dance with their movie-themed show Popcorn and street dancers from the Beat Project Dance Company.

For something a little more unusual, antiques expert Eric Knowles from the BBC's Antiques Roadshow will share his anecdotes from the TV show and even give a free valuation to audience members' treasures, plus medium Colin Fry brings his 2011 tour to the Kettering theatre.

The season features plenty for younger audiences, starting with Katy Ashworth's Meet, Greet, Sing and Play featuring your favourite nursery rhymes.

The family show Dick Whittington comes to the Lighthouse in October, performed by the Kettering Youth Theatre Group, who offer an early taste of panto.

But the festive season really kicks in with the show Cranford at Christmas, a play from the Chapterhouse Theatre Company in which the community must unite to keep the spirit of Christmas alive.

The finale is the Lighthouse's Christmas show Cinderella which features a host of famous faces. Starring Coronation Street and dancing on Ice star Danny Young as Prince Charming, the festive family show tells the much-loved story of the girl who longs to go to the ball – but will she manage to outwit her evil stepsisters?

Tickets for all these shows and more can be booked by calling the Lighthouse box office on 01536 414141.

For more information visit the website www.lighthousetheatre.co.uk

■ Colin Fry.

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26th Sep. **Blackpool.** Fm £195.
3rd Oct. **Southport.** Fm £165.
10th Oct. **Eastbourne.** Fm £240.
17th Oct, 28th Nov. **Torquay.** Fm £170.
24th Oct. **Llandudno.** Fm £245.
7th Nov. **Bournemouth.** Fm £210.
14th Nov. **Isle of Wight.** Fm £240.
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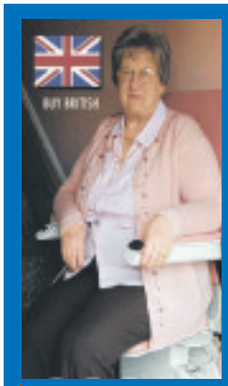

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Entertainment

SATURDAY

MUSIC

Brafield: 3D Trio, WMC, Bedford Road (A428), 7.30pm; food available.
Northampton: The Boiler Club, garage, rock 'n' roll, The Mobbs, blues, garage and R&B, with The Snakeman 3, DJ and guests, the Labour Club, Charles Street, 8pm-1am. £3 on door.
Northampton: Wordsworth, The Romany, Kingsley Road.
Northampton: Karaoke, Thomas a Becket, St James Road.
Northampton: Maria Confait, Jimmy's WMC.
Northampton: Folk in the Afternoon, 2-5pm, refreshments, licensed bar, free entry, Fishmarket, Bradshaw Street.
Northampton: Splitting Rock, 9pm, Swan & Helmet, Clare Street.
Northampton: Ashley, Kingsley Park WMC, Kingsley Park Terrace.
Northampton: Brian keyboard and vocalist, Spencer Club, Dallington.
Northampton: Rockers Reunion, Disco and BBQ, Old Black Lion, Marefair, 12.00 noon onwards.
Northampton: Disco, The Workhouse, Wellingborough Road*.
Northampton: Lock Down (indie rock band), The Rover, Weedon Road, 9pm.
Northampton: Eskimo Charlie and Panic Disorder, Duke of York, Semilong.
Northampton: Gary Beckwith, 8.30pm, British Rail Club, St Andrews Road.
Northampton: Andy Stone, Northampton WMC, Sheep Street.
Northampton: Motown disco, Spread Eagle, Wellingborough Road
Northampton: Acoustic session on the roof terrace, Black Bottom Club, George Row.
Towcester: Steve Lovett, 8.15pm, Maple Leaf Country Music Club, Towcester Supporters Club, Islington Road, £5 entry, 01327 351539.

SHOWS AND SALES

Blisworth: Blisworth Wildflowers, The Dairy, 4a Northampton Road. Nursery selling cottage garden plants and wildflowers; open every weekend or by appointment. 01604 859383.
Earls Barton: Sylvanian Family Day Out at Jeyes of Earls Barton (on The Square). The garden and conservatory will be transformed into a Sylvanian wonderland of families, games and prizes. 01604 810289.
Kettering: 1970s/80s Weekend at Wicksteed Park from 10.30am; BMX stunt show, cycle races, trade stands, fashion show and more.
Kettering: Coffee Morning, Kettering & District Arthritis Care, Toller Church Rooms, Gold Street, 10am-12 noon, refreshments, DVDs and cakes for sale.
Northampton: Umbrella Fair, The Racecourse, midday-11pm (also Sunday midday-6pm). Free arts, community and environmental festival, local talent and cultural diversity.
Northampton: New to You sale, Park Square, Kings Heath, 10.30am-1pm.

OTHER

Billing: Billing Aquadrome's Companion Dog Show, pedigree, obedience and novelty classes plus flyball, agility, trade stands, bouncy castle, doggie games, open 10am, pedigree judging at 11am, novelty judging at 1pm, £5 entry per car with voucher.
Harrington: Carpetbaggers Secret War Museum, Harrington Airfield, open weekends and bank holidays. Northampton 686608.
Northampton: Film: *Toy Story 3*, Barratts Club, Kingsthorpe Road, 10am.
Northampton: Country & Western Mind & Body Line Dance, 12.30pm, The Old House, Wellingborough Road, £2 entry, 01604 787246.
Sywell: Aviation museum open at Sywell Aerodrome; viewing area; refreshments, 10am-4pm.

SUNDAY

MUSIC

Bozeat: Jazz Lounge, Red Lion.
Brafield: Bobby Daniels (guitar/vocals), WMC, Bedford Road, A428, 7pm.
Chapel Brampton: Acoustic night; bring your own instruments; sound equipment provided, Brampton Halt, Pitford Road.
Kettering: Dave Johnson Jazz Band, Rockingham Road Pleasure Park, Kettering, 3pm.
Northampton: Kibworth Brass, Abington Park Bandstand, 2pm-5pm; Park Cafe open.
Northampton: Jazz night, The Longboat, Eastfield Road, Duston*.
Northampton: Singalong with keyboard player every Sunday, Royal Navy and Royal Marines Club, Lorne Road; members and guests welcome. Northampton 620471*.
Northampton: Soul and Motown night, Lord Byron, Kingsley Park Terrace.
Northampton: Ricky Swan, 7pm, Swan & Helmet, Clare Street.
Northampton: Elvis Tribute, Spread Eagle, Wellingborough Road, 5.30-8.30pm.
Northampton: Paul Needs, Kingsley Park WMC, Kingsley Park Terrace.
Northampton: A recital by Stephen George (tenor), accompanied by Paul Knappett, Abington Parish Church (Church in the park), 3pm, songs from shows and classic pieces, refreshments available and entry by donation.
Northampton: Simba Steel Band, The Broadmead, Broadmead Avenue, 4pm.
Stony Stratford: Folk session, Vaults Bar, The Bull, lunchtime*.
Thrapston: Alive & Kicking Singles Club for over 40s, Bridge Hotel, 8pm; free. 01832 734510.

OTHER

Harrington: Carpetbaggers Secret War Museum, Harrington Airfield, open weekends and bank holidays. Northampton 686608.
Middleton: Quiz and Play Your Cards Right, Red Lion, 8.30pm*.
Northampton: Music and fun quiz and Play Your Cards Right, Whitehills PH, Harborough Road*.
Northampton: Rob Benedict's pub quiz, Old White Hart, Cotton End, 7.30pm*.
Northampton: Rob Benedict's pub quiz, The Abington, Wellingborough Road.*
Northampton: Quiz night, Barratts Club, Kingsthorpe Road*.
Northampton: General knowledge quiz, The Artizan, Artizan Road, 8.15pm*.
Northampton: Quiz, King Billy, bottom of Bridge Street, 8.30pm*.
Sywell: Aviation museum open at Sywell Aerodrome; viewing area; refreshments, 10am-4pm.

PRESERVED RAILWAYS

Chapel Brampton: Northampton and Lamport Railway, Pitsford Road. Trains running from 11.45am Sundays; volunteers always wanted. Northampton 820327*.
Irchester: Award-winning Narrowgage Railway, Ircheser Country Park, 10am-4pm; free.

SHOWS AND SALES

Hollowell: Gardens open under the National Garden Scheme, 11am-5pm: Hillview; Ivy Cottage and Rosemount; teas in the village hall. Combined admission £3.50 (child free).
Kelmarsh Hall: The gardens at Kelmarsh Hall open Suns, Tues, Weds, 11am-5pm (Thurs 11am-8pm). Northampton 686543.
Northampton: Abington Park Community Dog Show 2011, entries £1 per class and proceeds go to Cancer & Bio Detection Dogs Charity, advance entries by emailing northamptonpetservice@live.co.uk or registering on the day from 9.30am, judging starts at 11.30am.
Northampton: Umbrella Fair, The Racecourse, Kettering Road, midday-6pm; free arts, community and environmental festival.
Northampton: Kingsthorpe Grove Allotments open day, 10.30am-4pm. Crafts, plants, produce, games, cakes, refreshments, Eastern Avenue South.
Northampton: Mereway Allotments open day, 11am-3pm; sale of fruit, veg and plants; tombola, teas, cakes, craft stall and more, off the layby next to Abbeyfield School.
Stanion: Indoor Market, Village Hall, 10am-1pm, to book a table or for more infor call Jan on 01536 267031.

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Thursday, August 11, 2011

ROADTEST: Volkswagen Amarok

REVIEW BY IAN DONALDSON

Wolf whistle

ACCORDING to Wikipedia, amarok means wolf to an Eskimo, but applied to the tail of this new Volkswagen it felt more like a pussycat.

A surprisingly gentle feline, in fact, until provoked into action by a rutted incline so steep you'd need crampons to climb on foot.

Back on a firmer footing, the VW Amarok became almost car-like in its comfort, betraying its carry-all role in life only on the bigger bumps.

Most of the time this big double cab pick-up behaves more like a Golf than a go anywhere load lugger that doubles as weekend family transport.

Built in Argentina and on sale around the world, the Amarok really does move the game on in a part of the mobility market noted more for old fashioned virtues like toughness than for style and clever engineering.

Even so, Volkswagen has kept an old fashioned rear suspension set up and a ladder frame chassis, like its rivals, because they've proved the toughest solution to carrying loads just about anywhere.

But under the bonnet you'll find a smaller diesel than favoured by rivals, with the unit in the test car using two turbochargers to keep power flowing at both low and higher revs.

The result is a vehicle that will give the opposition sleepless nights on running costs, while letting the Amarok feel lively when pushed into an on-road role. All-wheel drive, selectable from the driver's seat, means the Amarok laughs off the rough stuff too.

But the biggest surprise of all is the way you don't feel you're slipping back two decades as you slide into the front seats. Tough and easily wipeable the insides of the Amarok's rivals may be, but you'd never confuse them for a modern car.

Well, sitting behind the leather clad steering wheel of the test car and easing off the (leather covered) handbrake and selecting first from the (you've guessed) leather wrapped gearlever, you could be sitting in a Golf.

The dashboard is as well finished and the instruments as smart and easy to read as in that middleclass hatchback favourite and there's the added advantage of sitting higher than a mere car driver, all the better for seeing what's coming the other way.

The double cab will take five adults in comfort, with the rear bench folding flat for extra carrying capacity when not needed for human transport. The load area out the back is big enough for a Euro pallet to fit sideways, should the need arise.

There are three trim levels on offer and two versions of the 2.0 litre diesel engine; the test car was a mid-range Trendline with the more powerful option under the bonnet. It returned 33mpg on my morning's drive around Northamptonshire.

The Startline has rubber flooring, electric windows and Climatic semi-automatic air conditioning; the Trendline interior adds floor carpet, automatic air conditioning, leather-covered steering wheel and trip computer and multifunction display; while Highline models includes leather upholstery and heated front seats.

Prices range from £16,995 to £21,575 excluding VAT and it will be between an owner and his accountant to decide if that tax applies. It won't for the vast majority of business users tempted into a new Amarok, who will discover they're driving more a car with the hidden assets of a pick-up than a tarted up commercial vehicle.

FACTFILE

CAR: Volkswagen Amarok Trendline 2.0 BiTDI 4MOTION
PRICE: £23,743 (£18,995 exc. VAT)
DRIVETRAIN: 2.0 litre 161bhp diesel engine 6-speed gearbox
PERFORMANCE: Top speed 112mph 0-62mph 11.1 seconds
ECONOMY: Euro average 35.8mpg CO2 209g/km road tax £550 first year, then £245
SIZE: 5254mm long 1954mm wide
SAFETY: EuroNCAP 4 stars
INSURANCE: TBC
WARRANTY: Three years or 100,000 miles

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All prices subject to VAT

BMW Six Cylinder Service

Oil Service	£105.00	£119.00	£132.00
Inspection 1	£171.00	£185.00	£198.00
Inspection 2	£248.00	£262.00	£275.00

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BMW Eight Cylinder Service

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Inspection 2	£209.00	Rear Brake Pads	£85.00

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Mercury Sport

CUP KINGS – Michael Jacobs, Ashley Westwood and Sam Walker thank the travelling support at Portman Road on Tuesday night

PICTURES: KIRSTY EDMONDS

Johnson praises committed Town

GARY JOHNSON praised his Cobblers team's commitment to the cause as they completed another Carling Cup upset on Tuesday night.

Town won 2-1 at Ipswich Town courtesy of goals from Ben Tozer and Paul Turnbull to seal their place in the second round of a competition that last season produced three wins over higher-class opposition.

Johnson's men were worthy winners at Portman Road, and the manager was delighted to pick up his first scalp in charge of Northampton.

"It was a very sweet victory because we played some very good football," he said. "And I knew that as long as we showed our commitment our football would come through.

"It took us 10 or 15 minutes to get into the game but we didn't fade when they went in front, we wrestled our way back into it with our football.

"If we believe in ourselves we'll always be close to beating teams like this, from this level. Some of these lads need to aspire to being Championship-level players because they can be.

"Our combination play around the box was very good but I was especially pleased with our commitment, it was our commitment that won the game really."

Ashley Westwood put in a strong performance on his first start in his second spell with the club, producing a string of full-blooded blocks and bringing a solid level of organisation to the defence.

It meant Kelvin Langmead, who was signed on loan from Peterborough on the morning of the game, was kept on the bench until his late introduction – as a striker.

"Westy was brilliant, they were all brilliant," he said. "He's been very committed in training and we knew he was capable of putting in a strong game.

"I was thinking about playing Kelvin (Langmead) but I knew (Bas) Savage would tire first and I know Kelvin can play either position.

"He saw the game out for us and I was pleased for him, I was very proud of all the lads."

Savage started the game but Adebayo Akinfenwa's name was on the team sheet right up until kick-off, when he limped off with an injury seconds before the match started.

Gary Johnson was a happy man after Tuesday night's Carling Cup win over Ipswich

Strength is not a problem for Jim

SAINTS boss Jim Mallinder feels he has a stronger squad going into the new Premiership season.

Mallinder has brought in a host of new names to bolster his squad that will be bereft of probably nine players during the World Cup, which over-runs the first six weeks of the campaign.

Last season Saints fell just 40 minutes short of landing one of the big prizes, as a a second half comeback saw Leinster beat them in the Heineken Cup final.

They also went out in the Premiership semi-finals and Mallinder admits he was unable to rest and rotate players as much as he wanted last term.

But with 11 new additions Mallinder is hoping that will change this term and the club will be able to lift one of the two big prizes.

"We are happy with the squad we have got," said Mallinder.

"It is always ongoing, but last year we came a little bit unstuck in a couple of areas, but I feel we have strengthened those areas this summer.

"I feel our depth is improving. The players we have brought in combined with the academy lads we are developing, who are pushing for places means, I think, we are stronger.

"You want a squad who are big enough to play top class rugby all the time. If we know we are missing during the Six Nations and World Cup a number of players like we are, then you need players who can come in and fit in without letting the side down - and across the board we have got those now."

Mallinder is hoping to be able to rotate players this season after the team tired in the second half against Leinster, with forwards coach Dorian West admitting afterwards that the players were running on empty.

"Early on it is going to be difficult to rotate players," said Mallinder. "Because we have only got a certain number of players in the squad, when you lose nine or 10 to the World Cup then that restricts it anyway.

"Hopefully those players will play well and put pressure on the internationals coming back."

The **Northampton Mercury & Citizen** is published by Northamptonshire Newspapers Ltd, Upper Mounts, Northampton, NN1 3HR, Tel: 01604 467000; Printed by Sheffield Web, Caxton Way, Outgang Lane, Dinnington, South Yorkshire, S25 3QE. Published by Sheffield Newspapers Ltd, York Street, Sheffield, S1 1PU. Registered as a newspaper at the Post Office. Reproduction of the contents of this newspaper is not permitted without prior consent of the publisher.

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